

LDS Biogve 3:511

SIMMONS, Mary Ann Ford, a well known Temple worker and faithful Latter-day Saint, was born Nov. 25, 1827, in Cuckfield parish, Sussex, England, the daughter of William Ford and Mary Ann Knight. The following sketch of her life is written



by herself: "I was naturally of a religious nature, but could not bring myself to unite with any church, as there was something lacking with them all. My mother died when I was nearly fifteen and a little later the churchmen in our neighborhood began to hunt up young people to be

confirmed and join their churches, but I told them I did not want to join any, for I could not feel satisfied with their doctrines. I then went to Brighton to live with my brother, and while there was married on Dec. 24, 1849, to George Simmons. He was a carpenter who hired men to work for him. One of these was a Latter-day Saint and one day my husband asked me if I should like to go and hear what the "Mormons" had to say. I consented, and as soon as I heard their message I knew that it was what I was hunting for. I was baptized Sept. 6, 1852, and soon afterwards my husband was baptized. In April, 1855, we left our home in Brighton in order to emigrate to Zion. We sailed from Liverpool April 17, 1855, on board the ship 'Chimborazo' with a company of 431 Saints under the direction of Elder Edward Stevenson. Our company landed in Philadelphia, May 21st. We arrived at night at St. Louis, Missouri, feeling very miserable and lonely, but when I took my little boy, three and a half years old, from his bed to bring him on shore he said, 'Mamma, we will go on shore, go into a house and have some dinner.' This proved to be a true prophesy, as a brother with whom we had been acquainted in England met us and took us to his home to supper. The next day we started for the camping grounds of the Saints, called 'Mormon Grove,' near Atchison, Kansas. About two weeks later we started on our journey across the plains, traveling by ox teams in Richard Ballantyne's company. When we were about two days' journey from Laramie, a sister was making her bed in the wagon when a gun close by was accidentally discharged and shot her arm off. She ran out into the camp with the arm hanging by a piece of flesh. She was taken back to Laramie, but died on the way. A day or two later a young man was playing with a gun and ac-

cidentally shot a young girl in the leg. She too was sent back to Fort Laramie, but died on the way. In August I gave birth to a baby boy, but he only lived half an hour and was buried on the plains. We arrived in Salt Lake City Sept. 25, 1855, and found that the grasshoppers had eaten all the crops. If it had not been for the blessing of the Lord, we could not have lived through that winter. We were without fire and lived for two months on frozen potatoes and the coarsest sifting of corn meal. One of my little children was sick and a neighbor brought her a cup of milk warm from the cow every morning, and thus saved her life. When the spring came, we lived on segoes until the garden stuff began to grow. In June a baby girl was born to me and a week later we had to leave Salt Lake City because of Johnston's army and went to Provo, Utah county, returning again to our home in Salt Lake City a month or so later. Afterwards we moved to Morgan, Morgan county, where my husband built the first brick house in Morgan City. In March, 1877, I was called to be a counselor in the Relief Society in the South Morgan Ward and in 1884 was set apart as a counselor in the Morgan Stake Relief Society presidency. In 1898 I went to Australia to visit my brother, my husband having passed away in September of the previous year. Returning home in 1899 I made my home in Salt Lake City where I worked in the Temple, having previously done considerable work in the Logan Temple. In 1906 I again visited my brother in Australia, but as I engaged in missionary work, buying tracts and distributing them, my brother wanted me to return home, he being a wealthy man was ashamed that I should be associated with the Latter-day Saints. This little effort on my part was the first missionary work ever done in county, Utah, the son of Harland

Williamstown, New South Wales, Australia. In 1907 I returned to Salt Lake City where I again engaged in Temple work and soon afterwards my brother died in Australia, leaving all his means to strangers, although I was the only relative he had. I am now in my 92nd year, have had twelve children, seven of whom are living. I have 74 grandchildren, 116 great-grandchildren and 7 great-great-grandchildren."